



## Arizona Department of Agriculture

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# News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Second Illegal Slaughterhouse Operator Sentenced

The Arizona Department of Agriculture and the Maricopa County Attorney's Office today announced the sentencing of Rafeal Serrato who pled guilty to violating the Maricopa County Health Code by selling diseased meat, selling meat without a license and operating an unlicensed slaughterhouse in Tolleson.

"The defendant's actions endangered the health of many citizens and his illegal slaughterhouse must be shut down for the protection of our community," Thomas said.

The court today ordered him to pay a \$3600 fine, \$270 reimbursement for the investigation and complete 24 months of probation. The judge also required him to perform 100 hours of community service, to abide by all Arizona Department of Agriculture regulations and prohibited him from slaughtering animals on his property.

"We are pleased with the outcome of this case and hope this stands as a warning that such activities will not be tolerated," said Donald Butler, Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

The illegal slaughterhouse operation was extremely unsanitary. Investigators observed pigs being slaughtered on hot and dirty concrete floors. The water used in the slaughtering process was kept in uncirculated plastic barrels to wash the tools and hands of those slaughtering the animals. The same water was used to clean the meat. In addition to the unsanitary conditions of the slaughterhouse, the defendant sold a 240 lb. pig purchased by an undercover inspector that tested positive for chronic viral pneumonia and bore scars from a bacterial type pneumonia.

Rafael Serrato's brother, Jose Merced Serrato-Maciell (d.o.b. 8-6-59), pled guilty to operating an unlicensed slaughterhouse at 6808 South 107 Avenue, in Tolleson earlier this year. Jose Serrato had been illegally selling insect-laden meat products containing Salmonella to the public and was fined \$3,700 and sentenced to three years of probation.

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